

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend claims 1, 11 and 12, and add claims 17 through 31, as follows:

1 1. (Currently Amended) A method for processing and separating an imbricate formation
2 of flexible, flat objects, ~~in particular, printed products, with which the flat objects by way of~~
3 during product feed, comprising ~~a conveyor means are~~ continuously ~~[[fed]]~~ feeding the items in
4 an essentially regular formation to a transfer module and ~~from this are transferred~~ transferring the
5 items from said transfer module to a conveyor module, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein flat objects
6 are fluently fed to a guide ~~[[means]]~~ within said transfer module, ~~[[that]]~~ and the flat objects during
7 their ~~conveying~~ conveyance are brought into an obliquely standing position by the guide ~~[[means]],~~
8 and ~~[[that]]~~ the flat objects from this position ~~individually or in a defined number~~ are separated in
9 a defined number from the remaining flat objects by ~~way of a separating means~~ separator, and
10 conveyed away by a conveyor ~~[[means]].~~

1 2. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein the flat objects ~~with~~
2 ~~the feeding~~ are fed onto a guide surface of the guide ~~[[means]]~~ and are conveyed lying in an
3 overlapping manner, wherein the trailing edge of a flat object in each case lies over the leading
4 edge of the subsequent flat object, and the objects during the transport over the guide surface are
5 continuously erected, ~~wherein~~ whereby on removal of the flat objects from the guide ~~[[means]]~~ the
6 obliquely standing position of the flat objects is inclined opposite to ~~the transport~~ a direction of
7 said conveyance.

1 3. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein the flat objects are
2 folded sheets, wherein the fold of each folded sheet in a trailing manner lies over ~~[[the]]~~ a
3 respective subsequent folded sheet and the folded sheets which stand obliquely on removal from
4 the guide means stand on their cut-edge side.

1 4. (Original) The method according to claim 2, wherein the flat objects are folded sheets,
2 wherein the fold of each folded sheet in a trailing manner lies over the respective subsequent
3 folded sheet and the folded sheets which stand obliquely on removal from the guide means stand
4 on their cut-edge side.

1 5. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the erection of the flat objects
2 is effected by active braking or acceleration of the flat objects at least one edge by way of conveyor
1 means.

2 6. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the flat objects on removal are
3 actively transferred into an obliquely standing position in the conveying direction by way of
4 folding-over means.

1 7. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the flat objects before removal
2 are displaced transversely to their main conveying direction.

1 8. (Original) A device for carrying out the method according to claim 1 with a product
2 feed, comprising a conveyor means with a transfer module arranged after this and with a conveyor
3 module for removal of flat objects from the transfer module;

4 wherein the transfer module contains a guide means which comprises a guide surface which
5 at least in regions is inclined with respect to the horizontal, and that on the side proximal to the
6 removal device there is arranged a brim or abutment.

1 9. (Original) The device according to claim 8, wherein the guide surface at least in
2 regions is designed concave or convex, or comprises at least two sections with a different
3 inclination of the guide surface.

1 10. (Original) The device according to claim 8, wherein the inclination of the guide
2 surface at least in regions is more than 30°.

1 11. (Currently Amended) The device according to claim 8, wherein ~~in that~~ the guide
2 surface comprises guide elements which serve for the regional acceleration and/or braking of the
3 flat objects.

1 12. (Currently Amended) The device according to claim 8, wherein ~~in that~~ the brim or
2 the abutment is arranged movable with respect to the guide means.

1 13. (Original) The device according to claim 8, wherein, on that side of the guide means
2 which is proximal to the removal device, there are arranged active means for separating individual
3 objects or groups of objects.

1 14. (Original) The device according to claim 8, wherein the brim or the abutment
2 comprises movable elements conveying the objects in the removal direction.

1 15. (Original) The device according to claim 8, wherein, in the removal region of the
2 objects, there are arranged means for transversely displacing the objects.

1 16. (Original) The device according to claim 8, wherein, above the guide means, there are
2 arranged retaining means acting on the free edge of the objects.

1 17. (New) A guide, comprising:
2 a path comprised of a first surface guiding leading lower edges of a plurality of flat,
3 flexible items to a curved surface extending downwardly from said first surface to an inclined
4 surface, said path supporting the lower edges of the items during progressive transformation in
5 orientation of the items into an imbricate array while the items advance from said first surface and
6 along said inclined surface; and
7 an abutment extending transversely above said path to obstructively engage seriatim
8 a lower portion of each of the items descending said convexly curved surface and terminate said

9 passage of each item along said inclined surface while the item is obliquely erect.

1 18. (New) The guide set forth in clam 17, comprised of a mechanism positioned to remove
2 the items from engagement with said abutment by grasping the upper edges of a defined number
3 of the items and sequentially lifting the items grasped away from said inclined surface.

1 19. (New) The guide set forth in clam 17, comprised of said inclined surface exhibiting
2 an inclination of more than thirty degrees from horizontal.

1 20. (New) A guide, comprising:
2 an abutment; and
3 a path comprised of a first surface positioned to continuously receive leading lower
4 edges of a flow of flat, flexible items, and a curved surface leading downwardly from said first
5 surface to an inclined surface terminated by said abutment while said path supports leading lower
6 edges of the items with said flow of the flexible items advancing from said first surface during
7 progressive transformation in orientation of the items within the flow into a formation with the
8 items oriented obliquely erect at said abutment.

1 21. (New) The guide of claim 20, comprising a conveyor positioned to sequentially
2 remove from said path, a defined number of the items embraced by said abutment.

1 22. (New) The guide of claim 20, with said curved surface comprising a convex curve.

1 23. (New) The guide of claim 20, with said curved surface comprising a concave curve.

1 24. (New) The guide of claim 20, comprised of said first surface disposed to engage cut
2 edges of the items with folded edges of the items trailing the cut edges along said first surface.

1 25. (New) The guide of claim 20, comprised of said path engaging cut edges of the items
2 with folded edges of the items trailing the cut edges along said first surface.

1 26. (New) Guiding, comprised of:
2 receiving leading lower edges of a flow of flat flexible items upon a first surface
3 leading to a curved surface extending downwardly from said first surface, with upper edges of the
4 items trailing the lower edges during said flow along said first surface;
5 aligning the items by precipitating a shift in orientation of the items within the flow
6 as the items progress from said first surface via said curved surface and along a downwardly
7 inclined surface with an abutment extending transversely across said inclined surface causing an
8 obstructive engagement of a lower portion of a forwardmost of the items while the forwardmost
9 item is obliquely erect; and
10 removing a defined number of the items seriatim from said engagement.

1 27. (New) Guiding, as set forth in clam 26, comprised of removing the items from said
2 engagement by individually engaging the upper edges and sequentially lifting the items
3 corresponding to the upper edges away from said inclined surface.

1 28. (New) Guiding, as set forth in clam 26, comprised of providing said inclined surface
2 with an inclination of more than thirty degrees from horizontal.

1 29. (New) Guiding, comprised of:
2 receiving cut leading edges of a flow of flat flexible items upon a first surface
3 leading to a curved surface extending downwardly from said first surface, with folded edges of the
4 items trailing the cut edges during said flow along said first surface;
5 aligning the items within the flow by allowing the flow to progress from said first
6 surface via said curved surface and along a downwardly inclined surface with an abutment
7 extending transversely across said inclined surface causing an obstructive engagement of a lower
8 portion of a forwardmost of the items while the forwardmost item is obliquely erect; and
9 removing a defined number of the items seriatim from said engagement.

1 30. (New) Guiding, as set forth in clam 29, comprised of removing the items from said
2 engagement by sequentially grasping individual ones of the folded edges and individually lifting
3 the items corresponding to the folded edges grasped away from said inclined surface.

- 1 31. (New) Guiding, as set forth in clam 29, comprised of providing said inclined surface
2 with an inclination of more than thirty degrees from horizontal.